

YOU BE HOLY FOR I AM HOLY

# THE SIMPLE GUIDE TO HOLINESS

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ROSS THOMPSON



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Ross Thompson *Dip Theo, B Theo.*  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### DO YOU HAVE YOUR REWARD?

Have you claimed your reward? If you are a Christian, you have a reward waiting. Many Christians do not have their reward. Let me explain – Romans 6:22 – *But now since you have been set free from sin and have become the slaves of God, you have your present reward in holiness and its end is eternal life.* If you have received Jesus as your savior the reward is yours. That reward is holiness. If you are not sure what holiness is and don't know how to receive it for yourself, this book is for you.

Holiness in the New Testament is a pure heart. The gift of Salvation came to us by the Gospel. There was no struggle to obtain salvation - we believed and received it by faith. A pure heart comes the same way. When Jesus became sin for us (2Corinthians 5:21) He made it possible for every believer to be holy.

It is important to understand that Jesus dealt with sin for the last time in His suffering, His death, and His resurrection. John the Baptist said Jesus was;

*"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)*

The Apostle Paul wrote;

*"He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."  
(Hebrew9:26)*

Having removed sin at great cost to Himself Jesus opened the way for each believer to have a pure heart. Strangely many of God's people don't understand that and hence are missing out on a vital and wonderful experience. The moment we are born again our lives become eternally linked with holiness. God has said His name is Holy. "*For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy...*" (Isaiah 57:15) The living creatures around God's throne in Heaven continue day and night saying, "*holy holy holy is the Lord God Almighty.*" (Rev 4:8) The Spirit of God who lives in us is the Holy Spirit. Holiness is central in the Christian life.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **AN EAR FOR THE WORD**

Faith governs our experience of life with God. Faith is produced from our knowledge of the Bible - Gods word. If our knowledge of the word of God is incomplete it will limit our experience. I think it is safe to say that all of us tend to read the Bible through the lens of our Denomination or doctrinal stance. We don't always realize how strong that preconditioning can be. We can then miss part of what God has said. We just don't see it.

The first Christians accepted purity of heart as part of Christs salvation. They took it for granted when a person accepted Jesus as savior and received the fullness of the Holy Spirit - purity of heart came with that. The word said Jesus was the lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world - that he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself – their faith took it as a one-time only event. For them sin was no longer an issue for the genuine believer. They believed God had done a complete work and it was their responsibility to accept it in its fullness. For them it was the end of sin when Jesus said, “It is finished”.

It is astonishing that we have lost that truth. Many Christians do not experience the fullness of Christ’s salvation from sin. That we stay sinners saved by grace is a widely held view. It is construed as humility when in truth it ignores parts of God’s word. The teaching that we should be daily confessing our sins to stay in fellowship with God has no foundation in Scripture. If all things are pure to the pure in heart (Titus 1:15) we have nothing to confess.

The Holy Spirit spending all His time convicting Christians of their sins - for confession - leading to change and to become more like Christ, is a

widely held view – a view not supported by Scripture. The only convicting the Holy Spirit does, according to the New Testament, *“Is to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come”*, that the world may turn and save themselves through Christ. Jesus said the Holy Spirit convicts the world, *“Of sin because they believe not on me”*. (John 16:9) About Christians the New Testament says, *“For as He (Jesus) is so are we in this world”*. (1John 4:17) We have accepted teachings and opinions not found in the word of God and have allowed important truths to slip past us. It might be difficult to change long held opinions, but what choice do we have when faced with unmistakable revelation from God?



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

The Old Testament book of Isaiah has some of the best enlightenment about holiness.

*"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for the redeemed; the wayfaring men, yes, the simple ones and fools, shall not err in it and lose their way. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it, they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk on it. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:8-10)*

What an education those verses are. They are a prophetic description of the successful Christian life. Do you see how God is emphasizing no effort needed and easy for anyone? The Holy Highway, which is a metaphor for a holy Christian life, is there - finished - no more construction work needed. All the redeemed – that's us – need do is step up on to the Highway and begin walking. And look how easy it is to walk on this Holy Highway. Simple minded persons and fools can walk on the Highway with guaranteed success. Doesn't that throw new light on our ideas about living a holy life with God? In saying *"It is finished,"* at Calvary, Jesus was declaring He had done everything needed to give us salvation and a holy life. The effort was His - we can add nothing to it - we need only to receive by faith. He constructed the Holy Highway through His suffering, His death, His burial, and His resurrection. We walk on the Highway by receiving deliverance from sin, and in its place a

pure heart by faith from the Holy Spirit. We thank and worship God the rest of our lives for the effort Jesus put in to save us. Paul explains the fact this way;

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."  
(Ephesians 2:10)*

The Isaiah passage is a reminder that the Christian life is not complicated. Jesus did the arduous work. Our faith should be sincere and simple. *"But I fear that lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* (Paul to the Corinthians) No matter who we are we all come to Jesus through a simple prayer of repentance and receiving. Holiness becomes ours through a simple prayer of believing and receiving. I think God wanted to strike a blow against human self-importance in saying, *"... The simple ones and fools shall not err in it."* I remember reading of Corrie Ten Booms work amongst Downs Syndrome people. They were simple minded but that was no barrier to their receiving Jesus and His new life. If anything is supportive of the fact that holiness should be easy it is that statement – *"Simple ones and fools shall not err there"*. It's quite remarkable when you think about it - holiness – the life most of us perceived as the most difficult of all – God says is effortless and easy.

Did you know holiness Gods way is indestructible? It was never Gods intention for Christians to endure endless struggles with sin or evil. In the Isaiah passage we read nothing unclean can pass over the Holy Highway. The lion (the devil) and ravenous beasts (evil spirits) cannot come up on it. When God has purified your heart, a transformation takes place. You receive cleansing and innocence that is beyond the reach of sin or evil. There may still be battles, but they will be external, they will not touch the inner person. Paul explained this experience in his letter to Titus; *"To the pure in heart all things are pure..."* (Titus 1:15). The letter of 1John in the New Testament confirms this part of the prophecy:

*"We know that anyone born of God does not commit sin, but the one*

*begotten of God carefully watches over and protects him – Christ's Divine presence within him preserves him against evil and the wicked one touches him not." (1 John 5:18).*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### YOU CAN BE HOLY

Isaiah's passage points us to an experience available to all who have received Christ's redemption. I believe the words from Isaiah are God's idea of the normal Christian life. If you are a Christian this is God's highway for you. You may have been a member of that large group who through discouragement have had to put a successful holy life into the too hard basket - an impossible ideal - something beyond your reach. You have investigated various sources that have promoted disciplines and things to do to have to a holy life, but in the end, have been disappointed. Nevertheless, the exhortation is still on the page in our Bibles:

*"...But as He who called you is Holy, you be Holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'be Holy for I am Holy'." (1Peter 1:15-16)*

Peter's does not write to intimidate or frustrate us. If God is asking holiness of us, then He has given a way for us. We have the promise:

*"...As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and Godliness..." (2Peter 1:3)*

There must be a way for you and me to wake each morning and say in truth, "Hallelujah! today I am living holy as God is holy." The Holy Highway prophecy declares that holiness can be yours through a sincere prayer and faith. These scriptures are strong statements from God leaving no room for questioning or doubt.

You may have thought of a holy life as an impossibility for such a long time that you may need to do some work on yourself to accept what God

is saying. Charles Upham, writing way back in 1843, had this to say about the right attitude of mind: "It becomes a very important inquiry, whether holiness, in any strict and proper sense of that term, is something attainable in this present life. Among other reasons it is important to be able to answer properly this question, because unless we believe in the attainableness of holiness, we shall not be likely, such are the laws of the human mind, to reach it. We may say that without this belief it will be impossible to reach. And without holiness ... we may be assured that we shall not enter the secrets of the Most-High. The hidden life will be hidden to us, and there will be many things in the Christians privileges, more precious than rubies, which will never, in the present state of being, come within the range of our experience."

Another Preacher explains "...And if holiness is not attainable, God commands what is impossible. If this requirement is too great to be seen, it is too great to be commanded. No man ever strives to do what he knows to be impossible. God requires no impossibilities. All His requirements are based on gracious ability. He exhorts no man to do an impractical thing. We may just as consistently and hopefully insist upon and urge Christians to lay hold on holiness, as to urge sinners to lay hold on Christ for pardon and regeneration. What God commands, He promises to aid us in doing. This we understand to be a universal law of the Gospel economy. The Bible enjoins duty, but never without the promise of needful grace to perform it. Holiness for the child of God is the grand fact running through the whole book of God. If it is not true, the Bible is not true." (Rev J. A. Wood)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MADE FREE FROM SIN – A BRIEF LOOK AT THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### Hebrews

The book of Hebrews is a good place to start for anyone wanting to understand the benefits of Jesus' salvation. Why it does not hold a prominent place in teaching is a mystery. The first two verses of chapter ten (Hebrew 10:1-2) are the summary of the book:

*"For since the law shows only an outline of the blessings to come and not a perfect representation of the things themselves, the priests can never, by repeating the same sacrifices which they continually offer year after year, give complete freedom from sin to those who draw near. For then, would not the sacrifices have ceased to be offered, **because the consciences of the worshipers - who in that case would now have been cleansed once for all ... would no longer be burdened with sins.**" (Weymouth Translation)*

The writer uses different terms to describe the one experience for those who have taken hold of Christ's salvation. Here is the full list from the book: **Purged from sins; Experiencing perfection; Made perfect; Perfect regarding conscience; Perfected forever; Having a conscience purged from dead works; Being once purged; Having no more consciousness of sins; Sanctified once for all; Having Gods laws in the heart and written in the mind; Having Gods laws in the mind and written on the heart; Having a true heart; Having a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.** The term *no more consciousness of sins*, means having no consciousness of being a



sinner – no longer being conscious of sinning.

Here, in just one book of the New Testament is straightforward teaching on the result of Christ's once for all atonement for sin. Finality - the end of sin - is the theme of Hebrews. You would have looked in vain for a chair in the Old Testament Tabernacle. The Priests could not sit because their work was never finished. In sharp contrast Jesus sat at the right hand of God after He had offered one sacrifice for sin forever (Hebrews 10:12). A sermon has stuck with me over the years. The Minister wanting us to remember the core of his message kept repeating, "Seated Priest- finished work, seated Priest- finished work."

## **Colossians**

The circumcision not made with hands is a topic running through the New Testament, most often mentioned by Paul to Jewish listeners. In the following verse the phrase – "*By putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*" - is hard to decipher. The fact that we are still walking about in our bodies demands a different meaning than first suggests itself. Here are what respected commentators say about the verse.

*"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ." (Colossians 2:11)*

"The Apostle says they have already received circumcision, not material but spiritual, not the removal of a fragment of the body, but the complete putting off the body of flesh. A definite historical fact is referred to, as is shown by the aorist (in the Greek). This was their conversion, the inward circumcision of the heart, by which they entered on the blessing of the New Covenant. Expositors' Greek Testament with the circumcision made without hands - that made in the heart by the renunciation of all sin. The Jewish teachers insisted on the necessity of the literal circumcision to salvation; and hence, this subject is so often introduced into the writings

of Paul, and he is at much pains to show that, by believing in Christ, all was obtained which was needed to salvation. Circumcision was an ordinance by which it was denoted that all sin was to be cut off or renounced, and that he who was circumcised was to be devoted to God and to a holy life. All this, the apostle says, was obtained by the gospel; and, consequently they had all that was denoted by the ancient rite of circumcision. What Christians had obtained, moreover, related to the heart; it was not a mere ordinance of the flesh". (Barnes notes on the New Testament)

"The bodily circumcision was but of one member, in mere symbolism of one form of purity; the spiritual circumcision is the putting away of the whole of the power of the flesh, and that too, not in symbol but in reality". (Ellicott's Commentary for English readers)

"The spiritual circumcision effected through Christ. The fleshly circumcision removed only a part of the body. In spiritual circumcision through Christ, the whole corrupt, carnal nature is put away like a garment which is taken off and laid aside". (Vincent's Word Studies)

"By whom also ye have been circumcised - Ye have received the spiritual blessings typified of old by circumcision. With a circumcision not performed with hands - By an inward, spiritual operation; in putting off, not a little skin, but the whole body of the sins of the flesh - All the sins of your evil nature. By the circumcision of Christ - By that spiritual circumcision which Christ works in your heart". (Wesley's Notes on the New Testament.)

## **Philippians**

*"For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3)*

The people called the Jews under the law, the circumcision, because of the external physical operation. Paul says no, *"We are the circumcision"*. The people of the pure heart are the true circumcision. God has taken sin

away from us and made us pure and clean in our hearts. Paul makes having Christ's circumcision synonymous with being a spiritual person living beyond the flesh, and names the experience as the source of joy.

## **Romans**

*"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:28-29)*

God has never been happy with outward religious rites when personal relationship and warmth towards Him is lacking. Although the Israelites had to adhere to the instruction of circumcision, the Old Testament reveals that God expected more of them. He was looking for circumcision of the heart which for them was an attitude, a decision to put God first in their lives to the best of their ability.

*"So, circumcise the foreskin of your heart; be no longer stubborn and hardened." (Deuteronomy 10:16)*

We have the blessing of the fulfilment of the prophecy. (*"The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live - Deuteronomy 30:6"*) it means an inner spiritual life - the only life that meets with Gods approval.

## **1 Peter**

*"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Holy Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently from a*

*pure heart." (1Pet 1:22)*

Love is the greatest expression of spiritual living. Peter is teaching us to live that excellent life from within, from the depth of the spiritual well that is in us from the blessing of a pure heart.

## **Acts**

A short testimony by Peter reveals that the first Jewish Christians and the first Gentile converts began their Christian walk in an encounter with the Holy Spirit, the outcome of which was a pure heart. Acts fifteen has Peter speaking to a gathering of the Church leaders at Jerusalem to discuss whether circumcision was necessary for salvation. He tells how God instructed him to preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, and the people of his household. He says that God gave them the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit as received by the Jewish group in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. Peter rose up and said to them:

*"Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So, God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:7-9)*

The sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind - the tongues of fire on each of them - the filling of the Spirit with speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost - bought purity of heart to the gathered believers. Such was the commencement of the Church of Jesus Christ. Should our experience be any different?

## CHAPTER SIX

### LIVING FROM THE HEART

The cornerstone for Godly living for the first Christians was purity of heart. The New Testament confirms that. They built their lives with God upon the foundation of a pure heart. Here is a choice of verses from various New Testament books proving that truth:

*"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God." (Rom 2:29)*

*"...But as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." (Ephesians 6:6)*

*"....So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." (1Thessalonians 3:13)*

*"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith." (1Timothy 1:5)*

*"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2Timothy 2:22)*

*"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb 10:22)*

*"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in the sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with*

*a pure heart." (1Peter 1:22)*

*"...But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." (1Peter 3:4)*

We'll discuss why a pure heart was necessary in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### A PURE HEART – WHY?

Why did they need their hearts purified? Why do we need our hearts purified? The fact that humanity has a heart problem is a theme that runs through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Jeremiah makes it clear for us:

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt, and severely, mortally sick. Who can know it, and understand his own heart?" (Jeremiah 17:9)*

Jesus taught the Jews what made them unclean did not come into them from the outside. Instead the problem lay with what came out of them, from the heart. Later when the disciples asked for a deeper explanation, Jesus gave a formidable description of the human heart:

*"And He said, what comes out of a man is what makes a man unclean. For from within, out of the heart of men, come wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, stealing, murder, adultery, coveting, dangerous and destructive wickedness, deceit, indecent conduct, an evil eye, evil speaking, pride, foolishness, recklessness. All these evil purposes and desires come from within, and they make the man unclean." (Mark 7:20-23)*

In my early days as a Christian I attended a Church where one of the Leaders was an avid Evangelist. He asked me one day to come with him into the city to do some street evangelism and he showed me the visual presentation he intended to use to support his preaching. It was a large illustration of the outline of a heart filled with black pictures, mostly animals, standing for some of the heart conditions on Jesus' list. I remember two of them being a pig and a goat. I began to regret my decision to go with him because I was embarrassed. "He's going to stand up in public and use that thing!!" The Minister was an anointed evangelist and to my great surprise later that day, as he held the chart and spoke about the heart, an older man came forward to accept Jesus as his savior. He had obviously been a working man, and as I watched him walk forward on his own, on a busy inner-city street, uncaring as to who was looking on, I remember thinking, "that man has seen a lot of life," and I wondered what experiences he had been through that had convinced him of a need about the condition of his heart.

Paul tells us that through the disobedience of Adam many were made (became, were constituted) sinners; that through one man, Adam, death came because of sin and death spread to all men because all men sinned (Rom 5:12, 19).

"Sin is wrong doing, but a state of sinfulness existed before the actions. Depravity is an involuntary state of the heart inherited from our first parents in the fall. Hence it is often described as inbred or inborn sin. Depravity is the root of sin - it is the inward fountain from which active sin originates - that inward cause of which sins are the effect. It is deeper down and farther back in our nature than wrong doing. It is sin in embryo - that state of heart out of which acts of sin are born". (Thomas Cook)

By contrast an early church leader Athanasius bishop of Alexandria, writes of the inner condition all Christians should experience. "In the beginning wickedness did not exist. Nor indeed does it exist even now in those who are holy, nor does it in any way belong to their nature". (Writings of Athanasius)

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SOME INCORRECT IDEAS

The following are quotes standing for some widely held beliefs. Most Christians are familiar with Paul's exhortation to Timothy to, "*Rightly divide the word of truth.*" (2Tim 2:15) That does not have to be a complicated process. Most of the time all it takes is careful notice of the words used. For example, I read this **comment** recently; "Of course anyone who has read the Scripture knows that there is ongoing conviction of sin in the life of the believer." This has no basis at all in the New Testament. The idea comes from Jesus' teaching on the activity of the Holy Spirit in John 16:7-11. "*When He (the Holy Spirit) comes He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment...*" The New Testament always uses the term *the world* to refer to the people and the system that is outside of faith in Christ. Jesus is speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit in making people aware of their sinfulness and their need of Jesus' salvation. It does not refer to believers. Jesus confirmed that later when He said, "*He will convict of sin... because they believe not in me...*" (John 16:9). A careful consideration of the words used makes the meaning clear. The rest of this chapter looks at more of this sort of comment and applies the - 'take careful notice of the words'- principle, to further help with understanding the subject of this book.

**Comment:** "The book of Romans tells us that Christians need to prepare for a lifelong battle with the power of indwelling sin. They should not lose heart when they suffer temporary defeats."

**Discussion:** Paul's statement that he is struggling with sin that dwells in

him in Romans chapter seven, is the source of this idea. It seems to support the above comment until we get to verse eighteen. He seems to have thought that he is not being clear enough and needs to clarify what he means. He explains by saying, "that is in my flesh," which shows us he is talking about his body. That fact is also in verses twenty-three and twenty-four when he talks of sin in his members (body) warring against his mind. Further on he asks, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The condition of his inner man is revealed in verse twenty-two with this statement, "For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, with my new nature..." (Amp). The whole chapter is a description of Paul's learning to overcome his flesh by living in the Spirit.

We also have Paul's description of his personal Christian experience from 1 Corinthians 4:4. *"But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted: but the one who examines me is the Lord"*. This is not the testimony of a man struggling with sin. Why is he conscious of nothing against himself? Because he has no more consciousness of sin. (Hebrews 10:1,2)

**Comment:** "All Christians should work hard every day, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to get all sin out of their lives. This pleases God greatly and we will be rewarded by Him for our efforts."

**Discussion:** This idea is well off the mark and is just a product of someone's imagination. We have seen that Hebrews tells us the purging of sin by the blood of Jesus gives the automatic result of no more consciousness of sins (or conscience of sins). The comment above is telling us to be constantly thinking about sin every moment of every day - then adds to the mix with the idea that God (Holy Spirit) is also thinking about our sin every moment of every day. Ephesians 2:8-9 is the best response to this sort of idea; *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* If it was possible for us to work hard every day to get sin out of our lives, there would be justification in thinking ourselves

worthier of Gods approval than some others who had not put out the same effort. God is pleased when we fully accept the finished work of Jesus regarding sin. Our rewards come from obedience to whatever He has asked us to do.

**Comment:** "Each night before I go to bed I thank God for forgiving me for sinning all day long, then I never think about it after that."

**Discussion:** There is a hint here of laziness on the part of the speaker. They have thrown up their hands and not wanted to get into the details of Jesus' redemption. If I say I have sinned all day long and I claim God's forgiveness that covers everything. Our testimony should be in line with God's word. Compare these verses with the comment: *"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."* (1John 3:9)

*"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."* (1John 3:8) We show respect for Christ's salvation by making the effort to understand all God has revealed on the subject. What we say will then be in line with what He has said.

**Comment:** "Christians still have a sin nature within them and will finally be rid of it at death."

**Discussion:** Here is Adam Clarke's response to this thought: "Some say the body of sin in believers is, indeed an enfeebled, conquered and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of death finishes its destruction. So, then the death of Christ and the influences of the Holy Spirit were only enough to depose and enfeeble the tyrant sin; but our death must come in to affect his total destruction!? Thus, our death is, at least partially, our Savior!? And thus, that which was an effect of sin, (for sin entered the world and death by sin) becomes the means of finally destroying it: that is, the effect of a cause can become so powerful as to react upon

that cause and produce its annihilation!? The divinity and philosophy of this sentiment are equally absurd. It is the blood of Christ alone that cleanses from all unrighteousness: and the sanctification of the believer is no more dependent on death than his justification. If it be said that believers do not cease from sin until they die, I have only to say they are such believers as do not make a proper use of their faith: and what can be said more of the whole herd of transgressors and infidels? They cease to sin when they cease to breathe? If the Christian religion brings no other privileges to its upright followers, well may we ask wherein the wise man differs from the fool, for they both have one end! But the whole gospel teaches a different doctrine." (See Adam Clarke's sermons online)

**Comment:** "What do we do with the New Testaments language of 'fighting' and 'toiling' and 'pressing on' or of 'making every effort' and 'strive to enter,' which includes Jesus' exhortation to, "*Strive to enter the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able*"? (Luke 13:24) Aren't these instructions to better ourselves and to make ourselves more like Christ"?

**Discussion:** "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words I speak to you they are spirit and they are life.*" (John 6:63) These words by Jesus are the key to understanding the above question. If the flesh profits nothing those words about effort must have another connotation. We see their true meaning in Hebrews chapter four. There we have the paradoxical statement: *strive to enter His (Gods) rest*. Physically we can't strive and rest at the same time, just as we can't run to walk. Reading chapter three and four reveals that the writer equates the striving with having faith and being obedient. Chapter four verse nine of Hebrews tells us that the rest is ready and waiting and the entrance is by faith. Verse ten adds that those who enter Gods rest have ceased from their own works. The answer to the comment is - these phrases are spiritual words urging us to take hold of what we are in Christ as revealed to us in God's word, and by faith and obedience make them manifest in our lives. The Bible says, "*...The love of God has been poured out in my heart by His Spirit who is given to me*". (Rom5:5). I am to



believe it because God has said it - and I act it out in faith and obedience.

## CHAPTER NINE

### HOW TO HAVE A PURE HEART

It is straight forward. If we remember to keep it simple - Jesus has done the arduous work for our easy acceptance of salvation and holiness. Peter gave us the answer in his testimony to the leaders at Jerusalem. *"God ... gave them the Holy Spirit as He did to us ... purifying their hearts by faith."* How do we receive a pure heart? The same way we receive everything else from God. By faith! Martin Luther said, "The word says it, I believe it, that settles it.". When we consider that all we need for life and godliness comes to us from Jesus' suffering, death, burial, and resurrection, it is plain God is very willing to impart this blessings to us. Especially when we remember that most of us were in a state of antagonism toward God before we discovered what Jesus had already done for us out of love.

There is a difference in the experience of the purifying of the heart of the first Jewish Christians at Pentecost and the first Gentile believers of Cornelius' house. For the Jewish believers on the day of Pentecost it was a second experience, at least for the twelve. Back in John 20:22 we read that Jesus appeared to the disciples while they were hiding out behind closed doors for fear of persecution, and He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit..." that is when they were born again, receiving the life of God into themselves. The beginning of the giving of the Spirit may be the reason for their divided experience.

Their two part experience fits well with Isaiah's prophecy - redemption came to them first - later they were able to walk on the Holy Highway. Cornelius and his household were given everything at once by the Holy Spirit. The Centurion seems to have had no prior knowledge of Jesus'

teaching and what was happening among the disciples. No doubt, being a Roman soldier, he had heard the talk about the three hours of darkness while Christ was on the cross and he may have known the Chief Priests had paid off the soldiers who had guarded the tomb, who had seen the angel, and the stone supernaturally rolled back from the entrance. (Luke 23:44, Math 28:12) He would no doubt have heard of the Jewish Rabbi who rumor said was working miracles and healing the sick.

When the angel appeared to him and instructed him to send for Peter who would, "*Tell you what to do*" (Acts 10:1-6), he did not know what it was all about and what information Peter had to give him. When Peter did preach to them, the Holy Spirit fell on them all, giving them salvation, spiritual new life, the fulness of the Spirit and purity of heart in a one-time experience. Peter says they received all this by faith - which shows us it does not take a lot of faith to receive from God. It is quite likely that Cornelius and his people understood very little about what had happened to them until they received further teaching. This incident in Acts, I think, makes it possible Christians in our time may have this pure heart experience - but no teaching on the topic has hindered them accepting it.

## CHAPTER TEN

### MAKE THE TREE GOOD

All the good words from the New Testament apply to you now, if you have a pure heart. *Holy, blameless, faultless, pure, the righteousness of God, perfect, un-blame-able in love, sanctified, partakers of the divine nature, of pure soul, having a pure conscience,* and I would add innocent! Though the word is not in the New Testament, the principle is. Such is the power of the blood of Jesus. Paul was talking about innocence when he wrote to Titus:

*"To the pure in heart all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled." (Titus 1:15)*

Notice that he allows of only two groups of people - the pure and the unbelieving. The New Testament reveals this was the thinking and teaching of the first believers. They knew nothing of two natures struggling for supremacy within the believer. They would have rejected teaching that we continue in any sinful condition after salvation. I think in their intense love for Jesus and for all that He endured to save us, they would have taken offence at such ideas seeing them as devaluing His wonderful accomplishment. Before Paul - Jesus also talked of only two groups of people - and He said it was all about the heart:

*"Either makes the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." (Math 12:33-35)*

Also in Titus Paul explained a one-time purification of Christians; *"Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works"*. It does not make sense, if we give some thought to it, to read the many Scriptures on Christs once for all atonement for sin

- for us then to continue to focus on sin.

*"...And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen"*

*(Revelation 1:5, 6)*

*"...And circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit." (Romans 2:29)*

*"...Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit..." (1Peter 1:12)*

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS

The New Testament divides the life we have been talking about - the treasure - and the earthen vessel which carries it - the body. God has shined His light into our hearts, but we live in an earthen vessel. No matter how attached we are to the physical person we see in the mirror in the mornings, the truth is it will not make it to heaven. Of course, that is only half of the story and we will eventually have freedom from all that is mortal (liable to death) and will put on immortality.

Meanwhile, our experience in this life is that we are living in a body that is corrupt because of sin; "*The body is dead because of sin.*" (Rom 8:10) The only warnings about sin given to believers in the New Testament are about the mortal body:

*"...Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in its lusts." (Rom 6:12)*

As Christians with a pure heart we are awaiting one final event, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

*"But we are citizens of heaven, and from it we patiently await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation, to be like the body of His glory and majesty, by the*



*power whereby He is able to subject everything unto Himself."  
(Philippians 3:21)*

Most of the exhortations about sin, to believers, in the New Testament are about our handling our bodies correctly - not allowing the body which includes the carnal mind, to lead us astray. The mind includes the memory and it is helpful to understand that in this life we will always remember our past. But it is powerless, and we should not allow it to have any influence on our pure heart.

On the positive side our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. We have the promise of help and strength from God to live well in our bodies and to present them to God for righteous living (Romans 6:13, Romans 8:11, 1Cor 3:16). As believers we must learn to live from our spirits. From our *true real life*, as the Amplified Bible describes it. Until that time comes when we are, *"Absent from the body, and present with the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 5:8)

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **VOICES IN AGREEMENT**

"That is the wonder of the cleansing power and the cross of Christ man. The wonder is that Jesus purposed to make your heart and mine just as sweet and lovely and pure and holy as His own. That is the reason that He can accept the Christian as His bride. Who could imagine the Christ accepting Christians polluted, defiled, of a lower state of purity or Holiness than His own? If you have felt, dear brother or sister, that you have been a sinner above all who have dwelt in Jerusalem, as some did, be assured that the cleansing power of Jesus Christ is equal to your need, and the thoroughness and almightiness of His Spirits working in you can make you a king and a prince, lovely and beautiful, pure of heart and life like unto Himself." (John G Lake)

"The whole design of God was to restore man to His image and raise him from the ruins of the fall, in a word, to make him perfect, to blot out all his sins, purify his soul, and fill him with holiness; so that no unholy temper, evil desire, or impure affection or passion should either lodge or have any being within him; this and this only is true religion or Christian perfection. A less salvation than this would be dishonorable to the sacrifice of Christ and the operation of the Holy Ghost; and would be unworthy of the appellation of 'Christianity'. Those who deny it, deny the whole scope and design of divine revelation and the mission of Jesus Christ." (See Adam Clarkes Commentary and sermons online.)

"Living without sin are words that shock many excellent persons, but how otherwise can the grand purpose of Christ's mission into the world be accomplished? He came, 'to save His people from their sins' - but if the Christian cannot be saved from sinning, if the teaching of the

Westminster Catechism is correct, 'No man even by the aid of Divine grace, can avoid sinning, but daily sins in thought word and deed,' then the plan of redemption is a failure." (Thomas Cook)

"We are to come to God for an instantaneous and complete purification from all sin, as for instantaneous pardon. In no part of the Scriptures are we directed to seek the remission of our sins seriatim - one now and another then, and so on; neither gradation pardon nor gradation purification exists in the Bible. For, as the work of renewing and cleansing the heart is the work of God, His Almighty power can perform it in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And it is this moment our duty to love God with all our heart and we cannot do this until He cleanse our hearts, consequently He is ready to do it this moment ... believing now, we are pardoned now; believing now we are cleansed from all sin now." (Adam Clarke)

"Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Spirit, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement has power to cleanse from all sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, which is justification, but we are washed entirely from its pollution, freed from its power, and enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts, and to walk in His Holy commandments blameless," (Rev. Luther Lee)

"No Christian is cleansed into maturity, nor do any grow into purity. Even a very new Christian may be cleansed from all inbred sin and become a pure Christian. They will then go on to grow in grace." (Rev. J A Wood)

"It is worthy of notice that in the New Testament we never read expressly and unmistakably of sanctification as a gradual process." (Dr. Beet)

"We grasp by faith the sin consuming power which sweeps the heart clean at a stroke." (Thomas Cook)

"Insist now on full redemption received now by faith alone. Press the instantaneous blessing (Holiness). To talk of this work as being gradual would be nonsense, as much as if we talked of gradual justification.

Expect it by faith, expect it as you are, expect it now." (John Wesley)

"Many are not in the enjoyment of holiness simply because they have never reached a point at which they have said, 'I must have the blessing now'. (Mrs. Phoebe Palmer)

HAVE YOU CLAIMED YOUR REWARD?